

Talking Points and Q/A

- The Navy will begin random testing of urine samples for synthetic chemical compounds like Spice this month. Commanders may take appropriate actions related to health, safety, and security based on a positive result. Every positive sample will be sent to NCIS for further investigation with a view towards potential disciplinary or adverse administrative action by the service member's command.
- The initial testing will be conducted by a contracted laboratory, with the Navy Drug Screening Laboratory capable of conducting in-house testing later this year.
- Possession of synthetic compounds, such as Spice, is a punishable offense under the UCMJ.
- Synthetic chemical compound drug use has impacts on your career and family.
- Navy has zero tolerance for drug use, including the use of designer and synthetic chemical compounds, such as Spice. Navy continues to educate Sailors on the dangers of drug use to include new and designer drugs through targeted awareness campaigns and continues to work closely with local governments to identify users and distributors.

Questions and Answers

Q1. How does the Navy intend to deter synthetic chemical compound use? (BUMED/CNP)

A1. The Navy's policy on use of synthetic chemical compounds or designer drugs, including synthetic marijuana substances like Spice is simple and clear –zero tolerance. Drug abuse by members of the Navy is incompatible with the maintenance of high standards of performance, military discipline, readiness, and reliable mission accomplishment. Navy personnel determined to be unlawfully using, possessing, promoting, manufacturing, or distributing synthetic chemical compounds or like substances and/or paraphernalia shall be disciplined, as appropriate, and processed for administrative separation.

Q2. Can the Navy test for Spice or other designer or synthetic drugs? (BUMED/CNP)

A2. Yes. Commanders may take appropriate actions related to health, safety, and security based on a positive urinalysis result. Every positive result will be sent to NCIS for further investigation with a view towards potential disciplinary or adverse administrative action by the service member's command. Additionally, Navy and Marine Corps commanders can have urine samples tested for several of the compounds found in Spice-like products at the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System (AFMES) when the sample has been collected in conjunction with an ongoing investigation (such as NCIS, CID, etc).

Q3. Can Sailors and Marines be punished or discharged based on the results of urinalysis for synthetic drugs?

A3. Commanders may take appropriate actions related to health, safety, and security based on a positive urinalysis result. A positive urinalysis result for synthetic drugs will be sent to NCIS for investigation. In addition, the results may lead the commander to conduct further inquiry if misconduct is suspected. The service member's commanding officer is charged with the maintenance of good order and discipline and will have discretion on how best to proceed in such instances.

Q4. When will the Navy start testing for synthetic chemical compounds like Spice and how many samples will be tested each month? (BUMED/CNP)

A4. The Navy has been testing urine samples seized from suspects during criminal investigations for nearly a year. This month the Navy will begin random testing samples for compounds commonly found in synthetic drug products like Spice. The capacity for testing for designer drugs will continue to expand.

Q5. Are you testing all the samples that get taken at urinalysis for synthetic chemical compounds? (BUMED/CNP)

A5. At the present time we are conducting random samples of urinalysis for synthetic compounds like Spice.

Q6. How much will the Spice testing cost the Navy? (BUMED/CNP)

A6. During FY 2012, Navy will invest \$1,730K to test for synthetic chemical compounds and in FY 2013 as the number of specimens being tested increases we expect the investment to increase to \$2,900K in FY 2013.

Q7. How will the Navy's testing stay up to date when the people manufacturing drugs like Spice can change the chemical make up of the drug which could not test positive on a drug test? (BUMED/CNP)

A7. We will continue to modify our testing procedures and pace the changes being made by producers of synthetic compounds as they modify their procedures. As our testing capability increases, engaged leadership and education of our active duty and civilian members of the dangers and zero tolerance in regard to use of this class of substances is of highest priority in prevention of adverse occurrences because of its use. Our screening and detection programs, as they advance, will provide the back-up leadership and education programs.

Individuals who manufacture and market synthetic chemical compounds like Spice are attempting to get around the law and have little concern for the potential dangers of the substances they produce. This increases the likelihood that these drugs will do permanent damage to one's mind and body. It is incumbent upon us to ensure our people know the risks to their health, their career, and their family.